
Dr. *GIBSON*'s
Affize Sermon,
Preach'd at
CROYDON.

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S E R M O N

A G A I N S T

*Speaking Evil of Princes, and
those in Authority under them:*

Preach'd at the

A S S I Z E S

Held at C R O Y D O N in S U R R E Y,
March 7th. 1706.

Before the Right Honourable

The L^d Chief-Justice H O L T,

A N D

Mr. Justice T R A C Y.

By EDM. GIBSON, D.D. Rector of *Lambeth*
and Chaplain to his Grace the Lord Archbishop
of *Canterbury*.

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ACTS xxiii. 5.

----- *It is written, Thou shalt not speak evil
of the Ruler of thy People,*

TH E S E Words were spoken by St. Paul, while he stood before the Council of the Jews; and they are cited out of that Body ^{Exod.} of Laws, which God deliver'd to the Israelites by ^{22. 28.} the hand of Moses. The occasion of St. Paul's using them, was this; At his first appearance before the Council, he made a solemn profession of the Integrity of his Heart and Conscience, *Men and* ^{Acts 23.} *Brethren* (says he) *I have liv'd in all Good Conscience^r before God until this day:* and altho' it was very just and natural for one so maliciously accus'd, to make this profession of his Innocence; yet it gave great offence to the High-Priest, insomuch that he commanded him to be smitten on the mouth. This unjust and opprobrious Usage, provok'd St. Paul to charge him with *Hypocrisie*, for sitting there to ^{v. 3.} judge him *after the Law*, and yet commanding him to be smitten *contrary to the Law*. Which Charge was in it self undoubtedly true; and as to the Freedom and Severity of it, that might seem in human account to be justify'd, or at least excus'd, upon
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on a Provocation thus great and surprizing. But so far was St. Paul from vindicating his Behaviour, that being put in mind that it was the *Supreme Magistrate* of whom he had said this, he presently revok'd it, and condemn'd himself by the express

v. 5. Words of the Law, *Thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People*; not only To the Ruler, as if the Crime had consisted in reviling him to his Face; but *thou shalt not speak Evil Of him*, thou shalt not censure, expose, or vilify him; but thou shalt preserve a just Reverence to his Person, his Authority, and Administration.

For it is plain, that the *Evil-speaking* or *Censuring* which God there forbids with regard to the *Supreme Magistrate*, is not meant barely of such Censures as are *groundless* and *unjust*: (these were generally forbidden towards *all Men*, of what rank, degree, or quality soever; and the Magistrate could not be suppos'd to have less Title to the Benefit of that Prohibition, than the rest of Mankind:) But the plain meaning and design of the Precept, was to guard the Persons and Authority of Princes from the Insults of *Licentious Tongues*; which weaken their Authority, and disable them from answering the Ends of Government; and to which, notwithstanding, there is such a perverse Proneness in Human Nature. And altho' this restless and seditious Spirit has, no doubt, been working more or less

less in all Ages ; yet perhaps there was never any Age, wherein it has reign'd with greater Malignity, or with less Reason, than in ours.

Which being a Practice no less contrary to the Laws of *God*, than *Man* ; it may be justly expected, that the Ministers of *God* should do their part towards the Suppression of it, by showing how inconsistent it is with the Duty of a *Christian Subject* : and the rather, because these Censures are generally utter'd under such Disguises, and dispers'd with so much Cunning and Secrecy, as not to be easily brought within the reach of *Human Laws* ; and so are under no Restraints, but those of *Reason* and *Conscience*.

Taking the Words therefore in their most obvious and natural Sense, and by *speaking Evil of the Ruler of the People*, understanding the malicious Censures and Suggestions of Subjects against the Person and Administration of their Prince ; I will show the great *Evil* of that Practice,

I. In it self ; as it is contrary to *Reason*, *Religion*, and the avow'd Doctrine of the *Church of England*.

II. In its Causes and Consequences ; as it generally springs from Envy, Ambition, or Interest ; and tends to weaken and unhinge the Government of Church and State.

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1. This Practice is contrary to *Reason*, as it inverts the natural *Course* and *Order* of things: according to which, the Prince, as the Fountain of Authority, is to derive Justice and Judgment to his Subjects by the hands of his Ministers. But if every private Subject may take upon him at pleasure to be a Judge of the publick Administration, and to be passing Sentence at every turn upon the Conduct and Behaviour of his lawful Superiours; this is to erect a new Court of Judicature, and, instead of relieving Justice from the hands of the Prince, it is in effect to pass Sentence upon him. And not only so; but it is a Sentence of the unfairest and most unequitable kind, as it comes from Persons whose Condition sets them at too great a distance from the *Springs* of Government, to be rightly instructed in Facts and Circumstances, and much less to enter into the *Reason* and *Foundation* of publick Counsels.

Nor is this the worst, that they take upon them to pass Judgment under that impossibility of knowing the Cause, and the necessity thereupon of Judging amiss if they will Judge at all; but this *Ignorance* of the Truth makes them liable to be misled into all the false Opinions of Things and Persons, that are industriously fram'd and insinuated by designing Men: Who being uneasy to see others in Favour or Authority, do first consider what kind of Sug-

Suggestions may most weaken and perplex the present Administration, and then infuse them into those busie Heads, as the most proper Instruments of their Ambition, Avarice, or Revenge.

They therefore whom the Providence of God has plac'd in *private* Stations, if they will act a wise and reasonable Part, ought to be very sparing and tender in their Judgment upon *publick* Affairs; especially, on the Censuring and Uncharitable Side. They should consider how weak and foolish a thing it is, to talk without Knowledge, to judge without Examination, to be very confident upon very slight grounds, and to be Slaves to the Interest and Ambition of more designing Heads. And the natural Resolution hereupon, is to leave the Measures and Counsels of State to the cognizance of their proper Court; and instead of swallowing and spreading Reports to the disadvantage of our Superiours, to be very wary how we believe or divulge them: because on one hand the Truth of such Matters must be to us uncertain; and on the other hand we know this to be a most certain Truth, that the greatest degrees of Innocence are not sufficient to protect Persons in Favour and Authority from the Slanders of an envious and malicious World.

As to Others, who are plac'd in *higher* Stations, and have a nearer view of the publick Management; they are indeed better qualify'd to judge in point

of *Knowledge* ; but then the same Opportunities which make them more *Knowing* in publick Affairs, show them many things which ought in Reason to make them more Candid in their Judgment upon the Administration. They know what a large and weighty Task the Concerns of the Publick are ; how many Difficulties arise, which the wisest Counsels could not foresee, nor the greatest Diligence surmount ; and how even the Cure of some Evils on one hand, may be oft-times attended with unavoidable Inconveniences on another. And they who know and see these things, should be so far from being the *first* in Censuring and Accusing the publick Conduct, that they ought in Reason and Equity to be the Correctors of others, whose Ignorance of these Matters shall at any time betray them to too great Freedom and Severity. Especially, when they know further, how much the Peace and Tranquillity of Kingdoms is disturb'd by such unreasonable Jealousies ; and yet how usual it is with Men of corrupt Principles to set them afoot, and Sacrifice the Publick Peace to their own Ambition and Resentments.

Could such Men, as they are *Subjects*, be persuaded to judge of their Behaviour towards their Prince, by the Thoughts they would have of the like Treatment from their own Servants ; this Comparison would let them see how unjust and unreasonable

sonable they are. They observe (it may be) the Fidelity and Abilities of one particular Servant, and distinguish him by some remarkable Instances of their Favour and Countenance, and admit him to a nearer Trust and Confidence in the management of their Affairs. This is no sooner done, but the Eyes of the rest are *evil towards him, because his Master's is good*; he is Censur'd and aspers'd, for no other reason but because his Master is pleas'd to think kindly and favourably of him, and he is openly declar'd unfit to continue in a Station, for which his Master in the choice has pronounc'd him the fittest Person under his Government. Disturbances of this kind, I doubt not, do frequently happen in larger Families; but surely the Master thinks himself very undutifully serv'd by the Promoters of them, and reckons their Behaviour a Breach of his Authority and a Reflection upon his Judgment, an unreasonable Interruption to the Peace of his Family, and an unhappy Accession to his other Cares and Difficulties in the Government thereof.

Now, it is the eternal Law of Reason and Equity, *Mat. 7. That every Man do, as he would be done by*; and if restless and ambitious Spirits would in their own thoughts transfer this *Domestick* Scene to the Civil Government, they would see how unworthily they treat their Sovereign in the same way; whose Authority is so much more Sacred, and whose necessary Cares

for the Publick are too great and numerous to need such Additions: Not to observe, that the ill influence of such unquiet Practices, is so much more fatal and pernicious in the case of the Prince, as a Kingdom is more considerable in all respects, than a private Family.

2. This Freedom in Censuring of Princes and their Administration, being so much against Reason and Equity, is also against the *Christian Religion*; one special Precept whereof, pursuant to the belief of a Providence, is this, That every Man
 1 Cor. 7. 24. 1 Thess. 4. 11. 2 Thess. 3. 11. 12. 1 Pet. 4. 3. confine himself in a quiet and peaceable way, to the proper Business of that Station wherein the Wisdom of God hath plac'd him: which is the true Foundation of Happiness to Publick Societies; and to Private Persons too, if they would understand their own Happiness. They therefore whom Providence hath plac'd in a *Private* condition, must remember that God has assign'd them Business of a *Private* nature: and when they make themselves Judges of the Publick Administration, and are hot and zealous in Matters of Government, they are in that respect *Irreligious*, by assuming an Office to which Providence has no way call'd them: Especially, when they become Parties in the work, and the Instruments of perplexing and disquieting their lawful Superiours, in the discharge of that high Trust which the Divine Providence hath committed to them.

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Every Christian Subject (whether he be high or low, rich or poor) ought to consider, before he enters upon such Seditious Practices, how expressly the Scripture has guarded the Person, Authority, and Administration of Princes, from all Invasions of this kind. They are there declar'd to be *the Ordinance of God*, and consequently are to be esteem'd ^{Rom. 13.} and regarded as his Vicegerents upon earth: A Doctrine, that has but little Influence upon those, who are ready to repay every little disobligation, with unworthy Reflections upon the Person and Conduct of their Prince.

Again, the Tribute which the Scripture assigns ^{1 Pet. 2.} them, is *Honour* and *Reverence* from their Subjects; ^{17.} but it is very ill paid by factious and discontented Men, who set themselves to vilify the Wisdom, Counsels, and Administration of Princes, on purpose to make them mean and contemptible in the Eyes of their People.

Further, the Laws of God and Man have made the Prince the Fountain of Power and Authority; and in what Channels it shall flow, or by whose Counsel and Assistance it shall be administer'd, is left to Royal Wisdom and Discretion, within the compass of the Laws. Nor is it only the Duty of every Subject, to be ready with his Advice and Assistance, when he is call'd upon to give it; but it is his Duty also not to murmur, repine, or be uneasy to Government, if his Advice happen not to be

be ask't, or not to be taken ; nay, to rejoyce heartily in the Welfare and Prosperity of the Publick, to what Hands or Heads soever it is owing. Which Branch of the Duty of a Christian Subject, seems now adays to be forgotten by too many ; who valuing their own Wisdom above that of their Prince, reckon it a just Occasion of Disgust and Resentment, if he employ not the very Persons they would name, or think that the Publick can prosper in any other way, than that they would direct ; and who extenuate the Success, and rejoyce in the Disappointment of publick Counsels and Designs, for no other Reason but because they are not the Fruits of their own Administration.

2 Pet. 2.
10. Jude, 8. This is that Unchristian Spirit, which St. Peter and St. Jude reprove, when they speak of some in their own days who were *Presumptuous* and *Self-will'd*, and thereupon *despis'd Government* and were not afraid to speak Evil of Dignities. And the Scripture has sufficiently declar'd the displeasure of God against all such Practices, in the terrible end of

Numb. 16. Corah and his Company, who murmur'd against Moses and Aaron (the Servants and Ministers of God) as having an exorbitant Authority, ; of

2 Sam. 15. 4. Absalom, who stole away the Hearts of the People, by insinuating the Male-Administration of his Father's Government, and the great Happiness they would enjoy if the publick Management were put into

into his Hands ; and of *Ahitophel*, who had such a ^{2 Sam. 17. 23.} high Conceit of his own Wisdom and Abilities, that he could not bear to see any other Counsellour prefer'd before him.

Nor has the Scripture only warn'd us by Precepts and Examples against all such undutiful *Practices*, but also requires every Christian Subject to abstain ^{Rom. 13. 1 Pet. 2. 13.} from them out of *Conscience*. And yet they, who asperse and perplex the Administration of Princes ^{Jude, 8.} so far as they may with Impunity, give the clearest Proof they can, that it is not *Conscience*, but the *Fear of Punishment*, which restrains them from higher Provocations and more open Acts of Sedition and Hostility.

Pursuant to this Obligation of *Conscience*, and with regard to the mighty Difficulties attending the publick Administration, and the general Influence it has upon Church and State ; the Scripture further enjoyns us to *Pray for Kings and all that are in Au-* ^{2 Tim. 2.} *thority, that by the Blessing of God upon their* ^{2.} *Counsels and Undertakings, we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.* But it is not likely, that any who has an envious Eye upon the *Counsellours* as possess'd of too much Favour and Power already, will pray heartily for the Success of the *Counsels*, to raise their Credit and Authority higher. And yet, as many as pray not heartily for the Prosperity of publick Counsels and Designs

Designs, and much more they who set themselves to perplex and obstruct them, are (we see) in the account of Scripture, Enemies to the publick Peace and Prosperity of a Nation.

To this Article of the Opposition of such Practices to *Religion*, I will add but one thing more; That whatever Instances of Duty are requir'd of Subjects by the Laws of God or Man, are further ensur'd and confirm'd to Princes by a solemn *Oath of Fidelity* to be aiding and assisting to them. With what honesty and integrity this Oath is taken, must be left to every Man's Conscience in the sight of God; but how little it is regarded by those who strive to make themselves considerable by Opposing and Dividing, and care not what injury they do the Publick if they can disable the Persons in Authority from Administring with Ease and Success; how little, I say, such Men regard that solemn Oath of Fidelity, may be easily seen by all, but must be more sensibly understood by the Prince, who feels the daily Difficulties arising from such Obstructions, and by the common Enemy, who plentifully reaps the Benefit and Advantage of them.

3. This Freedom in Censuring of Princes and their Administration, being so contrary to Reason and Religion, is also contrary to the avow'd Doctrine of the *Church of England*; which has not in any one Point distinguish'd her self more zealously

lously and constantly from Adversaries of all sorts, than in a Reverent and Religious Regard to Authority. She has always taught her Sons, to consider Princes as the Ordinance of God, and thereupon to reckon their Persons *Sacred*, and not only to speak of them with great Reverence, but to propagate a just and Honourable Opinion of their Wisdom, Goodness, and other Royal Virtues : And this, in order to gain and preserve to them the Love and Honour of their People, and thereby to confirm and establish their *Authority*, which will always be more or less weaken'd by every reflection upon their *Person*. And therefore that Seditious Distinction between the *Person* and *Authority* of the Prince, has been ever condemn'd by the *Church of England*, as an undermining of Government, and the Forerunner of Rebellion.

And next to the Honour due to the *Persons* of Princes ; our Church has ever inculcated a suitable respect to their *Administration*, or a great confidence in their Wisdom and Justice for the choice of such measures as may most effectually promote the general good of their People : Forbidding the rash Judgments of Private Subjects upon Publick Persons and Affairs, and warning us to be cautious how we listen to Suggestions against those in Authority, and teaching us, in consideration of the great difficulty of the work, to make just allowances for unavoidable slips and miscarriages.

The Laws, it is true, make a great difference between a Prince and his Ministers, in the *Charge* or *Imputation* of Mismanagement: But as it is a manifest Hardship upon Ministers, to have their Proceedings maliciously represented to the utmost disadvantage; so the Writers of our Church have wisely observ'd, that every such Representation is a real Wound to the Honour of the Prince; insinuating, that he is either *Weak* in not seeing their faults, or *wicked* in permitting them. And so, all Slanders cast upon a Ministry, do really end in the Dishonour of the Prince; upon whom therefore they are at best a very great Hardship, and the more dangerous as being always disguis'd with large Professions of Duty and Reverence to their *Person*. A Practice, which the *Church of England* can never approve, if for no other reason, for the sake of that excellent Prince King *Charles the First*; whose Enemies took all occasions to express the highest regard to his *Person*, because they found, the aspersing of his *Ministers* would do their work, and make him and his Government sufficiently odious among the People.

The Loyalty of the *Church of England*, being grounded upon a conscientious regard to the *Person*, Authority, and Administration of the Prince; has another excellent quality resulting from thence, which is, to be *Fixt* and *Lasting*; not to rise and fall

fall with the Favour of the Court, with which as it does not begin so neither will it end. And therefore, when we observe the same Person extolling or debasing his Sovereign according to the Smiles or Frowns of the Court; one while supporting Prerogative, and then again sinking it; at one time studying to make the Administration easy, at another time obstructing and perplexing it; we may be sure, such a Man has not the true Spirit of the *Church of England*, which acts upon a higher and more noble Principle than Humour or Interest, and needs not to be *brib'd* or *courted* into Loyalty.

Our Saviour us'd an Expostulation with some of the *Jews*, which may be very well apply'd to the Case before us: *If ye love them which love you, Luke 6. what Thanks or Merit have ye? For Sinners also^{32.} love those that love them.* Men of the most Seditious Tempers will be very civil and obliging to Government, as long as they are cherish'd and encourag'd by it: and therefore they who would be thought Loyal out of Conscience, or, in other words, according to the *Church of England Doctrine*, must go a great deal further; that is, in the point of Favour and Advancement, they must acquiesce in the Wisdom of their Sovereign, and having always their Duty and the Good of the Publick next their Hearts, they must continue the same Tenderness for the

Honour and the same Zeal in the Service of their Prince, under all Circumstances and in all Conditions. And as many as call themselves Members of the *Church of England*, and yet act contrary to this Principle, do not only so far cease to be *true* Members thereof, but give her Adversaries an Opportunity of Reproaching her, as if *Her* Loyalty and *Theirs* were equally built upon the sandy Foundations of Interest, Humour, and Ambition.

But against that Trust and Confidence in the Wisdom of the Prince, it has always been objected by the Enemies of Regal Government, that we cannot have too strict an Eye towards the Administration, upon which the Good of the Community so much depends. Nor did the *Church of England* ever plead, that the Relation which Ministers bear to their Prince, sets them above the reach of Justice: she only desires that they may not suffer purely for the sake of that Relation, or (if such a Relation must be criminal) that at least they may be Try'd and Convicted by Law and not by Clamour, before their proper Judges and not before the unthinking Multitude, by a plain Accusation and a fair Hearing and not by secret Slanders and Whisperings, upon clear and evident Proof and not upon the Suggestions or Insinuations of designing Men.

Deut. 13. As we find the method of Proceeding directed by
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by *Moses* in the case of Idolatry, *Thou shalt enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and behold if it be Truth, and the thing certain,* then, and not before, the Sentence of Condemnation was to pass. And the Writers of our Church, in prescribing the like Caution before we condemn publick Persons and Actions, consider wisely that Posts of Honour and Favour are always the marks of Envy, and that Envy is the Mother of *Slander* and *Calumny*; under which Head therefore, all Insinuations of that kind ought in Equity to be rank'd, till they appear upon good Authority to be true.

Particularly, when Designs are pretended against the very *Constitution*; it ought to seem incredible that such Changes should be meditated by Persons who were never *suspected* of the least Disaffection to it, and who have nothing but that Constitution to protect their own Rights, Liberties, and Religion. Men may differ in their Judgments concerning the *best* and *most proper Methods* for the preservation of Church or State in this or that juncture; but when either of these is *really* in danger from the Prince and the Administration, the Alarm will be *general*, because the Concern is so too: as we found it in a remarkable manner upon the late attempt to introduce Popery. And therefore when Dangerous Designs are charg'd upon the Prince and the Ministry by Persons evidently disgusted;
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when such Designs are directly contrary to the Education and Profession both of Prince and Ministers; when no Danger is suspected by very great numbers of Men, whose Stations enable them to see and whose Principle and Interest oblige them to prevent it; and, above all, when they who proclaim the Danger, will not allow of any Possible Remedy but their own Advancement to Places of Honour and Profit: In this case, every Subject who will consider and judge impartially, must see the Foundation and Tendency of such Slanders, and wonder how Men can pretend to preserve the *Church of England* by Methods so directly contrary to the Spirit and Doctrine of it, not to say, Methods which are a Scandal and Reproach to it.

Thus far we have seen, that this Freedom in Censuring of Princes and their Administration, is a very great Evil *In it self*, as it is contrary to Reason, Religion, and the *Doctrine of the Church of England*.

I will proceed to say something very briefly to the second General I propos'd, *viz.*

II. The further Evil of this Practice in its *Causes and Consequences*. For by the establish'd Rules of Morality and Religion, every Practice that is *Evil in it self*, becomes much more so, by proceeding from unjust or unworthy *Motives*, and by being the immediate Cause of some particular Mischiefs.

chiefs. And therefore every Man is bound in Conscience, before he enter upon any Measures (even tho' in their Nature never so Innocent,) to examine his own Heart, as to the Integrity of his *Intentions* and *Designs*; and weighing well the natural Tendency of such Measures, to give himself a moral Assurance that they shall work no Mischief in the end.

Now, the *pretended* motives to the Censuring of Government, are generally the same in all Ages; a mighty Concern for the Publick Good, an Abhorrence of the Measures and Designs of the present Administration, and a specious Resolution to protect the People from some terrible danger that is coming upon them. And these, without doubt, are exceeding well calculated for the ends of *Ambition* and *Popularity*; the Multitude being naturally unfavourable to Greatness, and very Jealous of their Superiours, and apt to declare Men Patriots from their Zeal and Clamour against the Persons in Authority. But however such Pretences may impose upon *Men*, and bring about the Designs of this World, they can never deceive Almighty God; who seeing the most inward Secrets of our Breasts, requires that in every thing we do, the Heart be upright and sincere, and that all its Counsels and Contrivances be grounded upon worthy Motives, and directed to just and Honourable Ends. And therefore all Persons who
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would approve themselves true Christian Subjects in the Eyes of God, ought to be very sure that their Zeal against the Administration proceeds not from certain *Selfish* and *wicked* Motives, which are generally suppos'd to have a mighty Influence upon the Minds of such Men. As,

1. Envy ; which is a repining at the Success and Prosperity of other Men ; especially when they are rais'd above the common level, and distinguish'd by special marks of Favour and Honour from their Prince. This is a sight very offensive to an Envious Mind ; which revenges it self upon the Person Advanc'd and the Author of the Advancement, in spiteful Reflections upon the Abilities of the first, and the Judgment of the second. It is this Spirit, which so industriously aggravates and divulges Faults where they are, and invents them where they are not ; for Envy (we may be sure) can never rest, till it has punish'd that unpardonable Crime of being favour'd and distinguish'd by the Prince.

2. Pride and Ambition ; the first, an immoderate Opinion of Men's own Abilities ; the second, as immoderate a desire to see them valu'd and regarded by others. And these two, when they are under no restraints of Religion, will naturally raise a mighty Uneasiness and Indignation in the Minds of such Men, to find their own Merits overlook'd, and others whom they had set so much lower in
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point of Abilities, esteem'd and advanc'd above them. And when they cannot be so considerable as they desire in the esteem of their Prince, they presently betake themselves to the People; into whom they insinuate the miserable State of things under the present Conduct, the necessity of putting a speedy stop to the Mischiefs hanging over their Heads, and, as the end of all, how happy it would be for Church and State, if themselves might be admitted into a share of the publick Counsels..

3. Interest : which may not perhaps be so much regarded by Persons of a Higher and more Honourable Rank, but works very powerfully upon many of their Dependants; who having built their Hopes upon the Favour of particular Persons, are extremely eager to see them in Places of Trust and Authority, and thereupon utter Enemies to all who are in present Possession. This Disposition never fails to make the publick Mismanagements great and numerous; nor can Men under such prejudices, see any possibility but in a change to their own Minds, for Church or State to be upon a right Foundation; that is (in truth) a Foundation upon which they may probably raise their own Fortunes.

It is to be fear'd, that these and the like Motives (*Envy, Pride, Ambition, and Interest*) have generally a greater share in all Censures upon the Persons

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and Administration of Princes, than either a Concern for the Publick Good, or any real Fears and Apprehensions of Publick Danger. And seeing these are Qualities which the Scripture every where Condemns, as utterly destructive of the Christian Spirit; whoever desires to preserve such a Spirit, ought to Examine his Heart diligently, whether he is not govern'd by them in any action of his Life, and especially in a Practice so unworthy and undutiful, as the Censuring the Conduct and Administration of his Prince.

And besides the Causes; every Subject who has a just concern for the Publick Good, will consider the plain and immediate *Consequences* of this Freedom in Censuring Authority; I say, the *plain* and *immediate* Consequences; such as it naturally produces, and we know by daily Experience to be the ordinary effects of it. Because such Consequences, being easily foreseen, are justly accounted so many Aggravations of the Guilt; and, being also Mischiefs of a Publick nature and influence, are a certain Testimony how little the Peace and Prosperity of a Nation are regarded by such Men, in Comparison of their own Interests and Resentments.

These ill Consequences are very obvious; and therefore I need but just name them:

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1. The first is, the daily Interruption it gives to Princes, in their Endeavours and Consultations for the Publick Good. The Security of Church and State against *Foreign* Attempts, is a Care great and weighty enough, and need not be enhanc'd by *Domestick* Disturbances. And yet if Princes have no way to restrain Subjects from Opposition, but special marks of Favour, and if a Favour done to one must be accounted an injury to many more, and that Injury a just ground of Censure and Resentment; it is plain, that Princes must be at greater pains to Cure the secret Distempers of their own Subjects, than to defend themselves against their open Enemies; and that they whose unreasonable Humours do thus divert Princes from the Care of the Publick Safety, can be no true Friends either to Prince or Nation.

2. Another unhappy Consequence of Censuring Princes and their Administration, is the breeding of Jealousies and Divisions among the People. For nothing can ever make a Nation easy and unanimous in Publick Measures, but a general Trust and Confidence in the Wisdom, Justice, and Integrity of the Prince. Which Confidence is not only weaken'd and undermin'd by such undutiful Censures, but is corrupted by degrees into *Fears* and *Jealousies* concerning the Administration. And when these Jealousies

are propagated and rooted in the Minds of Men, they always suggest the very worst Interpretations upon the Designs and Actions of Princes; and these ill Impressions make Subjects cold and heartless in their Service, and oft-times open Enemies to their Administration. And so, the *Promoters* of such Jealousies do not only become guilty of alienating the Affections of Subjects from their Prince; but, lifting a Party in opposition to the Publick Measures, they foment a perpetual War in the Bowels of the Kingdom.

3. But, 3^{ly}, however *Injurious* such Persons are to their Prince and Country; without doubt they are great *Benefactors* to the Common Enemy; who knows how fast our Divisions prepare the way for his Conquests, and feels not a more sensible Wound from any quarter, than the unanimity of our Counsels and a thorow understanding between Prince and People. Whereas, every *Diminution* of the Prince in the eyes of the People, is a proportionable *Increase* of the Greatness and Power of our Enemy; both as it sinks the Dignity and Authority of Government, and as every degree of uneasiness and dissatisfaction under a *present* State of Affairs, naturally disposes the Minds of Subjects to think more favourably of a *Change*. And altho' the Promoters of such Jealousies may possibly *mean* no further Change than

than their own Advancement ; it ought to be remember'd, that it is not in their Power, to what degrees they shall work, when once they are infus'd into the Heads of the People.

I have finish'd the two Points I propos'd, and shown the great Evil of a Freedom and Licence in Censuring the Persons and Administration of Princes ; first, *In it self*, and Secondly, *In its Causes and Consequences*.

The Sum and Substance of all, in order to our Practice, is this :

As we are *Christian Subjects* ; let us pay that dutiful and conscientious regard which Christianity enjoyns, to the Person and Authority of our Prince ; and setting aside Passion and Prejudice, let us act *heartily* and *sincerely* for the Publick good, as we will answer it in the presence of God.

As we are *Subjects to the best of Queens*, let us resolve to be the best of Subjects, and repose that Trust and Confidence in the Administration of our Sovereign, which her known Wisdom, Goodness, and exemplary Care of the Constitution of Church and State, deserve and require at our hands.

As we are *Church of England Subjects* ; let us be the constant Examples of *Duty and Decency* towards Authority ; and demonstrate our *Loyalty* to be the effect of *Principle*, and not of *Humour* or *Interest*.

Above all ; let none of us, by aspersing our Prince and sowing Jealousies and Divisions among the People, behave himself as if he were a *Subject of the common Enemy* : But let us joyn heartily in opposing all such Unchristian Practices, and be zealous and unanimous in supporting the Honour, Authority, and Administration of our Sovereign ; as the only Means (under God) to continue *Her* a Glorious Prince, and *our selves* a Happy People ; and the only Testimony that we Cordially join with the Church in that excellent Collect, on the day of Her Majesty's Accession to the Throne :

*Service
for the
8th of
March.*

---Give us Grace to Obey her Chearfully and Willingly for Conscience sake ; that neither our sinful Passions nor our private Interests may disappoint her Cares for the Publick Good. Let Her always possess the Hearts of the People ; that they may never be wanting in Honour to her Person, and dutiful Submission to Her Authority, -----through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

F I N I S.